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PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS: INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

Written statement* submitted by the Romanian Independent Society of Human Rights, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[11 January 2002]

*This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

GE. *200201026 4*
ENG

1. The Romanian Independent Society of Human Rights (SIRDO) is a non-governmental organisation set up in 1990 with the purpose to protect and promote human rights and fundamental freedoms, according with the principles of the UN Charter and the universal and regional conventions and treaties Romania is part to. Within its programmes focused on legal counselling, assistance and support for the victims of human rights violations in relationship with state authorities, SIRDO also has activities of human rights education and information.

2. The dissemination of human rights information covered by SIRDO also includes certain categories of persons (victims of torture, victims of domestic violence, prisoners, refugees, religious minorities, teachers, pupils, students, lawyers, etc.) who either ask for assistance in the field, or belong to groups of collaborators in various programs. Beside individual counselling, SIRDO prepared in time, by seminars and courses, a number of approximately 245 teachers on general human rights notions, 20 students in the refugee field, 1,500 prisoners on the rights of the person deprived of freedom and 10 lawyers to plead in the field of human rights.

3. The attention of our organization focuses on the means to implement in Romania the UN Resolutions (GA 55/94 and CHR 2001/61) entitled "United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004)". Subsequent to the analysis made on the Romanian national mechanism for the promotion of education and public information on human rights, we may say the following

   - The Romanian national system of education does not include, at any level, (primary, secondary, university) human rights as a studying course. It only appears in the civic education manual of secondary level and only in one chapter, while in the state university level in only one semester course and in the private one on a more diversified area;
   - The court instances obstruct the use of human rights in the act of justice, as they are stipulated in international documents;
   - The dissemination of UN documents and information on human rights is made only by translating them into Romanian and distributing them in various government sectors, where they come to lack importance;
   - The dissemination of human rights information for the population is reduced to one weekly TV show, with no written publication in this field;
   - The political discourse makes reference only to citizen's rights, which attracts the violation of the universal principle of human rights by invoking traditional elements and drawing attention of the public opinion from the real human rights values.

4. Considering the above mentioned, SIRDO asks the Human Rights Commission to focus its attention on the Romanian reports on the implementation of the Decade Action Plan and encourage the real reforms that the government must make to develop policies on education and dissemination of public information on human rights. A special demand would be to include as evaluation points in the medium term Reports the problems presented by SIRDO in paragraph 3 and which represent, in our opinion, the basis for the evaluation of the way in which Romania fulfils its duties.